



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/846/Part V/8
9 August 1995

TY OF ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-sixth session

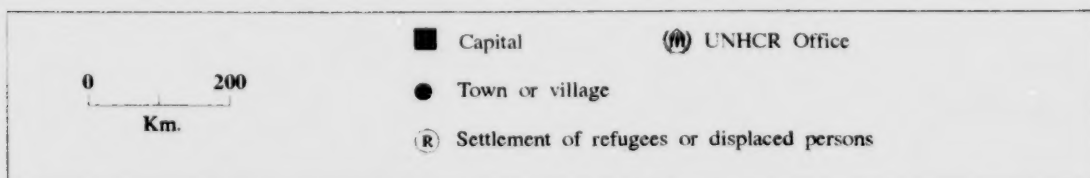
UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS:
REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND
BUDGET FOR 1996

PART V. SOUTH WEST ASIA, NORTH AFRICA
AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Section 8 - Mauritania

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

MAURITANIA



V.8 MAURITANIA

1. Beneficiary population

1. At 31 December 1994, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania had granted asylum to 82,217 Malian refugees. These refugees, mainly of Tuareg or Moorish origin, are located in the extreme south-east of Mauritania, in the governorate of Hodh-El-Chargui, and more specifically in the camps of Bassikounou, Aghor and M'Berra. However, when in April 1995, with the help of the Mauritanian authorities and other partners, UNHCR carried out a census of all the refugee population, it counted 40,023 refugees divided among the camps of Bassikounou (14,863), Aghor (10,590) and M'Berra (14,570).

2. The difference between these two figures is due to several factors: the impossibility of organizing an accurate census at an earlier date; the fact that the new census only takes account of vulnerable persons; the spontaneous return of many refugees to Mali; and the departure of refugees to other regions of Mauritania. This refugee population is, in fact, mobile, since it essentially comprises nomads engaged in pastoral activities.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

3. The number of refugees registered in the last months of 1994 and the situation in northern Mali pointed to the arrival of further refugees in 1995. Plans for 1995 were therefore drawn up on the basis of a population of 90,000 persons requiring aid. The 1995 allocation for the care and maintenance programme for refugees from Mali was revised to take this increase into account.

4. In March 1995, at the request of the Mauritanian authorities, the refugee population of Fassala camp was moved to M'Berra, some 12 kilometres from Bassikounou camp.

5. The situation in northern Mali in 1994 would not have permitted the organization of voluntary repatriation of the Malian refugees in Mauritania. Early in 1995, the peace process in Mali got under way again, and it has once more become possible to envisage the prospect of organized voluntary repatriation. Some refugees have already returned spontaneously to northern Mali. A meeting of the Tripartite Repatriation Commission was held in Bamako from 14 to 16 May 1995, at which consideration was given to the possibility of organizing a pilot repatriation operation of a group of 1,175 refugees to northern Mali.

3. 1996 country programmes

(a) Objectives

Malian refugees

6. UNHCR will continue to promote the organized voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. Pending repatriation, assistance activities should focus on the vulnerable groups living in the camps without adequate resources.

7. UNHCR will also encourage all measures enabling the refugees to become self-sufficient without jeopardizing eventual repatriation.

8. Particular attention will be paid to the Mauritanian populations coexisting with the refugees, often with a lower standard of living, and to the environment and the ecosystem, since the region's vegetation, of semi-desert type and thus very fragile, is particularly affected by the mass presence of refugees and their livestock.

9. UNHCR is prepared, if necessary, to help with the voluntary repatriation of Mauritanian refugees currently receiving assistance in Senegal and of Saharan refugees in transit in Mauritanian territory.

(b) Proposed budgets for 1996

General programmes

10. Care and maintenance: The new prospects for the return of Malian refugees and the reduction in the number of beneficiaries will have a considerable impact on the programme as a whole. A review of the 1996 programme is envisaged late in 1995. Multisectoral assistance will continue to be furnished to these beneficiaries in the form of food adapted to their traditional diet and to the climate, domestic articles which reduce environmental risks, the permanent renovation of shelters, and the maintenance of a health and sanitation system as closely adapted as possible to the extremely harsh climatic conditions.

11. Efforts will continue for the development of activities which encourage the refugees to be self-supporting. Support will be given to primary, secondary and higher education and vocational training in such a way as to attract and interest increasing numbers of young people, and the emphasis will be on preparing them for future employment. Given the nomadic tradition of the refugees and the fact that women are at the centre of activities, market-gardening, stock-raising and handicrafts will enable them to apply the techniques they have acquired on their return. They will also be trained particularly in social and community activities and in other income-generating activities.

12. In all the activities described above, an environmental protection component has been introduced, which has been strengthened for 1996. It ranges from the provision of fuel in order to reduce deforestation to the inclusion of environmental protection issues in school curricula.

13. The sectoral breakdown for the initial and revised 1995 and proposed 1996 allocations is as follows:

<u>Sector</u>	<u>Initial 1995</u>	<u>Revised 1995</u>	<u>Initial 1996</u>
Food	0	68 300	73 082
Transport	746 044	893 636	793 936
Domestic	677 625	1 058 900	1 058 900
Water	350 000	424 824	424 824
Sanitation	74 780	75 424	75 424
Health	625 887	726 588	822 778
Shelter	173 400	272 000	272 000
Community services	50 000	57 820	57 820
Education	294 300	240 125	240 090
Crop production	93 000	73 424	58 424
Livestock	122 951	122 951	0
Forestry	119 000	0	0
Income generation	50 000	165 400	100 400
Legal assistance	126 194	51 238	54 705
Agency op.support	<u>452 570</u>	<u>1 073 670</u>	<u>1 008 666</u>
<u>Total</u>	3 832 800	5 304 300	5 164 000

14. Voluntary repatriation: A pilot operation for the organized voluntary return of some 1,175 refugees is planned for the last quarter of 1995. Should the repatriation prospects be confirmed, an application for credit from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation will be made for 1995 and 1996.

15. Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI) Special Programme: A programme of scholarships (DAFI) for 14 university-level students has been set up directly by UNHCR with success. It will be necessary to continue these activities in the university year 1995/96, and they should be backed up not only by the placement of students abroad when their special subject is not taught in Mauritania, but also by a scholarship programme for secondary pupils, who at present receive no assistance.

(c) Implementing partners

16. The World Food Programme (WFP) will continue to provide Malian refugees with most basic food items. As from 1 July 1995, WFP will have taken over responsibility from UNHCR for warehouse management at Extended Delivery Points (EDP).

17. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) plans to undertake ad hoc activities in the sphere of environmental protection using its own funds.

18. The Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) will in 1996 continue with a veterinary training programme for refugee stock-farmers which it began in 1995.

19. At the request of UNHCR, the Commission of the European Communities agreed in 1995 to subsidize the sale of gas stoves and cylinders in the camps so as to help combat deforestation.

20. The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), which will be UNHCR's partner until 30 June 1995, may possibly be replaced by the Ministry of National Education for primary education and by the Ministry of Rural Development for market gardening activities. The vocational training and community services sectors should be transferred to World Vision, which plans to use its own funds for these purposes.

21. Alternative solutions will be sought to replace CARE-Australia, which is responsible for the water, sanitation and logistics sector, by a less expensive agency.

22. The medical sector is currently shared between Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Médecins du monde (MDM), the Ministry of Health and the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), which operates with its own funds. The drop in refugee numbers and the recent transfer of Fassala camp to M'Berra, near Bassikounou, no longer justify the number of agencies involved. Negotiations have been initiated with all the parties concerned to reduce the number of agencies operating in the health sector in 1996.

23. In 1995 an agreement was reached with the Governor of Néma on vaccination of the livestock belonging to refugees and to the indigenous population and on protection of the environment. If the objectives planned are attained in 1995, it may be envisaged to extend this agreement for the following year.

24. The registration of new Malian refugees in the camps and the management and distribution of food aid were entrusted in 1995 to the Food Security Commissioner (CSA). It is possible that registration will in future be entrusted by the Government of Mauritania to another body.

(d) Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

25. The variations due to changes in the budget parameters are not included in the following analysis (see part I of the Overview of UNHCR's activities)

(i) 1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)

26. Expenditure for 1994 was less than the revised estimates, mainly because of the reduction in expenditure on salaries and staff costs. In addition to the changes in the budget parameters, provision has been made for a full year's budget for the Junior Professional Officer, whereas his contract expired in April 1994.

(ii) Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)

27. The revised requirements for 1995 are higher than the initial estimates, with the creation of the post of Junior Professional Officer for protection. He is based at Nouakchott, but covers and supervises protection activities in the camps around Bassikounou.

(iii) Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)

28. The initial requirements for 1996 are less than the revised requirements for 1995. Under salaries and staff costs, the post of Junior Professional Officer will only be extended until the end of May 1996. Since at the time of writing no changes are planned in the way operations are conducted in Mauritania, the requirements for items other than salaries and staff costs are the same as the revised requirements for 1995, except as regards the purchase of furniture and equipment. Most of the requirements under this sector were covered by the 1995 budget.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN MAURITANIA

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995		1996	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
3,634.1 a/	3,832.8	5,304.3	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	5,164.0
0.5 b/	—	—	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	—
0.3 b/	—	—	RESETTLEMENT	—
700.3	701.4	914.9	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	760.1
4,335.2	4,534.2	6,219.2	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	5,924.1
113.2	181.2	181.7	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	179.0
4,448.4	4,715.4	6,400.9	TOTAL (1)	6,103.1
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
586.0	—	21.3	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Various assistance	21.3
1,483.8	—	—	Extra-budgetary food	—
60.6	60.0	74.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer See Overview Tables (Part II)	27.0
2,130.4	60.0	95.3	TOTAL (2)	48.3
6,578.8	4,775.4	6,496.2	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	6,151.4

a/ of which US\$ 488 incurred against Other Programmes

b/ obligation incurred against Other Programmes